

prolongarse en exceso, como ya ha ocurrido en otros aspectos de la vida nacional.

Una serie de 75 ilustraciones en blanco y negro, desde Picasso, 1911, hasta Juan Muñoz, 1987, completan la publicación. Para una mejor utilización de esta serie de estudios de tal complejidad y erudición un índice onomástico y de materias aliviaría en mucho las penas del lector.

The Ohio State University

VICENTE CANTARINO

CREACIÓN

Clara Janés. *Los caballos del sueño*. Barcelona, Anagrama, 1989, 221 pp.

Los caballos del sueño is a completely interiorized novel, yet paradoxically, its quest-like structure relies heavily on associations with specific sites. Instead of a discernible plot, the novel traces the shifting dynamics of three characters (Alma, Lobo, Raúl) who meet in Pamplona as students and whose lives are intricately enmeshed through friendship, love, and marriage. Hardly any exterior characteristics distinguish these people, but their relationship and philosophy define them amply: Alma (the most prevalent narrative voice) is abstract and seems only tenuously connected to reality; Lobo (to whom she is attracted, but with whom an ordinary relationship is impossible) becomes a rebel; Raúl marries Alma, but soon betrays her through infidelity, abuse, alcoholism.

In their attempts at self-definition, the individuals move through various philosophical and metaphysical stages, beginning with the existentialist attitudes of their student days, moving to political commitment (Raúl's communism) and ending with the key provided by Alma: the spirituality of platonic love. Alma's return to the places of bygone days suggests the circular nature of the text, in which temporal elements finally merge with the physical return («antes, había que ir al antes», p. 208). In fact, her own quest parallels a pilgrimage: she calls herself a «peregrina del amor» (p. 203) and toward the end of the book acknowledges the insignificance of carnal and material concerns: «Vana es la realidad.

Vano el cuerpo ante la unión del alma... Pues a lo largo de ese caminar, perdiendo lastre, se ha perdido la materialidad, se ha alcanzado el verdadero objeto de amor» (p. 216). Using the Spanish mystics as her point of departure, Alma eventually finds inspiration in the Islamic love story of Leyla and Mejnun, and like them, realizes that renunciation would provide a framework for her life.

The mystical overlay explains much of the abstract nature of the novel, in which the central theme of love becomes a springboard for meditation on matters both abstract and transcendental. Several recurrent themes emphasize this outlook: the fleeting nature of the material and the emotional world in which nothing lasts, not even love; the thin line that separates reality from unreality; the fragility of the *yo*; the emptiness of existence (the word *vacío* appears time and again).

Los caballos del sueño is also a novel about writing and literature, particularly in the relationship between author and text. Alma is both author and character of most of the narration; for her, the act of writing is a creation of reality, and she acknowledges the close bond between being and writing. The work is filled with metaliterary references —«el sentir que la novela es la realidad» (p. 9); «escribir... es un afán de ser» (p. 8)— yet Alma undermines the credibility of her text almost immediately, implying that the reconstruction of her story may be deceptive («todo lo que puedo contar es intención» [9]). In addition, several narrative voices (not so much in dialogue, but in parallel monologues) flesh out the text; various narrative frames (theater, diary, poetry) and considerable intertextuality (a large section structured on the Hamlet/Ophelia relationship; quotations from T. S. Eliott, Shakespeare, the Turkish poet Fuzili, and others) sensitize the reader even more to the influence of the literary text on Alma's reality.

The characters' retrospection moves almost exclusively through an inner landscape; even the minimal plot elements are tightly controlled through memory and subjected to intensive explanations and analysis. Therefore the novel's merits rest on the philosophy that underpins the text and on the style that complements the rhythms of the thoughts and interactions. The painstaking dissection of the past is complemented by a series of clearly demarcated opposites that both create tension and suggest a sort of totality through their possible reconciliation: existence/being; move-

ment/lack of change or motion; temporal/eternal; exterior/interior. Many references and images pit reality against dimensions of dreams, unreality, emptiness, imagination, etc. Yet the lyrical flow of the prose emphasizes the elusive, poetic and highly personal nature of the first-person narrative.

The separate yet connected texts of the three characters are various pieces of a puzzle that fit together only at the end of the work through the reconciliation of past and present, of love and sacrifice, as revealed finally through Alma's acceptance of the solitude and emptiness which paradoxically open the door to love and to creative powers.

University of Kentucky

MARGARET E. W. JONES

Carlos Blanco Aguinaga. *Un tiempo tuyo*. Madrid, Alfaguara, 1988, 122 pp.

Despite its unassuming title, Carlos Blanco Aguinaga's novel *Un tiempo tuyo* subliminally invites the reader to take part in the mute dialogue which is implicit in the novelist's use of the possessive «tuyo». Just as the intriguing and unidentified «tú» — you — spurs the reader's curiosity about the identity of the implied individual and the fictitious world in which (s)he dwells, the dialogic tú/yo modality serves as the basis for the structural underpinnings of the predominantly second-person narration. Within this sender-receptor framework also rest, it should be noted, numerous metaphysical ambiguities which deal with «tiempo» — time.

What, in effect, emerges almost immediately from this short novel is equally evasive. What seems to be a highly intimate second-person, stream of consciousness recanting in the first chapter of but another narrator's life, in future chapters turns into a shifting «narrative voice» which encompasses varied life experiences together with switches from male to female voices. The initial simplicity of the unnamed narrator's childlike focalization of his mother evolves into a cumbersome and disturbing narrative plotting of dense multiple-personality meanderings that culminate in an amalgam of memories, psychological queries, half-uttered references to names, events, dates and places, fragmented songs,